

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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DRAFTED BY EUR/SE:BGSCARLIS:BDF

APPROVED BY P:JJSISCO

EUR:AAHARTMAN

S/S - JPMOFFAT

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O P 250051Z JUL 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY

USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 175398

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GR, TU

SUBJECT: GREEK STATEMENT ON TURKISH ARMS

REF: ATHENS 5574

1. UNDER SECRETARY SISCO CALLED IN GREEK AMBASSADOR ALEXANDRAKIS JULY 24 TO EXPRESS THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH WE VIEW THE GREEK EMBASSY'S LATEST (JULY 23) PRESS RELEASE ON TURKISH ARMS. ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN WAS ALSO PRESENT AT THE MEETING.

2. SISCO POINTED OUT THAT AMBASSADOR KUBISCH'S REMARKS TO FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS MADE EARLIER TODAY (REFTEL) HAVE THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE US GOVERNMENT. SISCO ALSO STRESSED THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. NO USG OFFICIAL HAS SPOKEN OR PROFESSES TO SPEAK ON CONFIDENTIAL

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BEHALF OF GOG ON MATTER OF ARMS AID TO TURKEY.

B. WE ARE ENGAGED IN A SENSITIVE AND DIFFICULT LEGISLATIVE PROCESS OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO THIS ADMINISTRATION.

C. THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE ARE DIRECTLY AND PERSONALLY INVOLVED, AND WOULD NOT BE SO IF WE DID NOT BELIEVE THE LEGISLATION ON THE HILL ALSO SERVED THE INTERESTS OF GREECE, TURKEY AND THE PRESERVATION OF PEACE IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN.

D. WE HAVE NEVER PROFESSED TO SPEAK FOR GREECE, AND FOR THE GREEK EMBASSY TO EXPRESS ITSELF PUBLICLY IN THE WAY IT HAS IS AN UNHELPFUL AND IMPROPER INTRUSION IN OUR INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

E. DESPITE THE CONTENTION OF REPRESENTATIVE EDWARDS, AT NO TIME DID THE PRESIDENT OR THE SECRETARY CONTEND THAT THE GOG FAVORS THE ARMS EMBARGO.

3. UNDER SECRETARY SAID HE COULD SPEAK AUTHORITATIVELY BECAUSE HE HAD BEEN PRESENT AT THE WHITE HOUSE BREAKFAST WHEN THE REMARKS WERE SUPPOSEDLY MADE, AND HE HAD TAKEN NOTES. SEVERAL POINTS WERE MADE AT THE WHITE HOUSE: THAT IF THE PRESENT IMPASSE CONTINUES, IT WILL HURT GREECE, THAT GREECE HAS AN INTEREST IN RESOLVING THE CYPRUS PROBLEM, AND THAT GREECE WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN A SOLUTION AT AN EARLY DATE. SISCO EXPRESSED AMAZEMENT AT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT UNWILLINGNESS TO TAKE THE WORD OF USG AS CONVEYED BY THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE GREEK AMBASSADOR. SISCO SAID IF QUESTION IS RAISED ABOUT USG POSITION, WHY DID NOT HE PICK UP THE TELEPHONE AND SEEK OFFICIAL CLARIFICATION FROM USG. SISCO HAS HAD AN OPEN-DOOR POLICY TO GREEK AMBASSADOR WHO HAS BEEN FREE TO COME INTO HIS OFFICE AT AN HOUR'S NOTICE.

4. ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN ASKED ALEXANDRAKIS IF HIS JULY 22 PRESS STATEMENT (STATE 174359) WAS INTENDED AS A DENIAL OF THE REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS BY FORMER SAN FRANCISCO MAYOR GEORGE CHRISTOPHER. ALEXANDRAKIS REPLIED AFFIRMATIVELY, ADDING CONFIDENTIAL

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SPECIFICALLY THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD NOT MADE THESE REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM BY CHRISTOPHER. MR. HARTMAN NOTED THAT THE US WANTED TO BE HELPFUL TO GREECE AND IN RESOLVING THE CYPRUS ISSUE, BUT STATEMENTS BY THE GREEKS WERE SO DAMAGING TO OUR OWN INTERESTS THAT WE MIGHT BE FORCED TO CONSIDER STANDING ASIDE. SISCO EMPHASIZED THIS IS AN IMPORTANT POINT.

5. ALEXANDRAKIS' DEFENSE FOR RELEASING HIS PRESS STATEMENTS WAS THAT, DESPITE THE CLAMOR IN ATHENS, HIS GOVERNMENT HAD KEPT SILENT ON THE TURKISH ARMS ISSUE UNTIL JULY 21. THE GREEK EMBASSY ONLY EXPRESSED ITSELF WHEN IT WAS APPARENT THAT SOME CONGRESSMEN MISUNDERSTOOD THE

GREEK POSITION AND ATTRIBUTED THEIR MISUNDERSTANDING TO US OFFICIALS. THE GREEK EMBASSY COULD NOT HAVE ALLOWED THIS BILL TO PASS WITHOUT HAVING AT LEAST STATED ITS POSITION. NOT TO HAVE DONE SO WOULD HAVE SUBJECTED IT TO SERIOUS CRITICISM THAT IT WAS NOT DOING ITS JOB. RATHER HALF-HEARTEDLY, ALEXANDRAKIS SAID THAT HE WAS UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM ATHENS TO COMPLAIN ABOUT STATEMENTS MADE AT THE WHITE HOUSE BREAKFAST.

6. MR. HARTMAN POINTED OUT THAT ONE ONLY NEEDED TO GLANCE AT THE DAILY NEWSPAPER TO COMPREHEND THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE ON TURKISH AID HERE IN THIS COUNTRY. THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE SUGGESTING THAT THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY OF STATE WERE MISREPRESENTING THE GREEK GOVERNMENT POSITION ON THIS ISSUE WANTED TO DRAW OUT THE GREEK AMBASSADOR AND THEN EXPLOIT HIS REMARKS FOR THEIR OWN POLITICAL PURPOSES. KISSINGER

CONFIDENTIAL

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